



# FOOD SAFETY FACT SHEET

Kansas Department of Agriculture • Division of Food Safety and Lodging  
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## Turkey Safety

### Avoid Cross Contamination During Storage

- Buy fresh turkey no more than 2 days in advance.
- Defrost a frozen turkey in the refrigerator. Allow 24 hours for every 5 pounds. Do not defrost on your kitchen counter.
- The original bag on your frozen turkey should be intact to prevent raw juices from contaminating other food in the refrigerator.
- To thaw a turkey in the sink, keep cool water (70°F or below) running over the turkey. Cook immediately.

### To Stuff or Not to Stuff

The safest way to cook stuffing is separate from the turkey. Regardless of whether stuffing is cooked inside or outside the turkey, stuffing must reach an internal temperature of 165°F. If you choose to stuff the turkey, mix the ingredients just prior to filling the cavity and stuff it loosely to ensure proper cooking temperatures are reached.

### Safe Cooking

Turkey must reach an internal temperature of 165°F or above. Use a meat thermometer in the thickest part of the turkey (the breast) to ensure the turkey reached the correct internal temperature.

#### Approximate Cooking Times Unstuffed Turkey

8 to 12 pounds	2.75 to 3 hours
12 to 14 pounds	3 to 3.75 hours
14 to 18 pounds	3.75 to 4.25 hours
18 to 20 pounds	4.25 to 4.5 hours
20 to 24 pounds	4.5 to 5 hours

#### Approximate Cooking Times Stuffed Turkey

8 to 12 pounds	3 to 3.5 hours
12 to 14 pounds	3.5 to 4 hours
14 to 18 pounds	4 to 4.25 hours
18 to 20 pounds	4.25 to 4.75 hours
20 to 24 pounds	4.75 to 5.25 hours

### Deep Frying

If you plan to deep fry your turkey, please follow these safety tips:

- Never leave the hot oil unattended, and don't allow children or pets near the cooking area.
- Allow the oil to cool completely before disposal or storage.
- Immediately wash hands, utensils, equipment and surfaces that have come in contact with raw turkey.
- Turkey should be consumed immediately, and leftovers stored in the refrigerator within two hours of cooking.

### Leftovers

- Cut the turkey in small pieces or slice it.
- Refrigerate immediately in shallow containers. Do not allow food to sit out on counter.
- Use leftover turkey and stuffing within 4 days.
- When reheating, heat to internal temperature of 165°F or above.